



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/062,044	01/31/2002	Steven Teig	SPLX.P0093	1993

23349 7590 03/20/2003

STATTLER JOHANSEN & ADELI
P O BOX 51860
PALO ALTO, CA 94303

EXAMINER

LEVIN, NAUM B

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2825

DATE MAILED: 03/20/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

82

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/062,044

Applicant(s)

TEIG ET AL.

Examiner

Naum B Levin

Art Unit

2825

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 and 27-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 20-26 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 31 January 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ 6) ☐ Other: ____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-11, 14, 16-18 and 27-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Jain et al. (US Patent 5,649,165).

Jain discloses topology-based computer-aided design system for digital circuits and method thereof including:

(1) A method for producing a circuit description of a design, the method comprising:

a) from the design/topology, selecting a candidate sub-network/cutset (col.3, ll.48-52 and col.8, ll.35-42);

b) identifying a set of output functions performed by the sub-network (col.3, ll.31-35; ll.52-54 and ll.57-60 and col.8, ll.39-42);

c) based on the identified set of output functions, retrieving/implication a replacement sub-network from a storage structure that stores replacement sub-networks (col.8, ll.47-51);

d) determining/evaluating whether to replace the selected candidate sub-network with the replacement sub-network in the design (col.24, ll.50-65);

e) if determine to replace the selected candidate sub-network, replacing the selected candidate sub-network with the replacement sub-network in the design (col.24, ll.50-65);

(2) The method of claim 1, wherein the set of output functions includes only one output function (col.9, ll.7-9);

(3) The method of claim 1, wherein the set of output functions includes a plurality of output functions (col.22, ll.1-6);

(4) The method of claim 1, wherein the candidate sub-network includes multiple circuit elements (col.8, ll.54-57);

(5) The method of claim 1, wherein the storage structure stores sub-networks up to a particular complexity (col.8, ll.50-47 and col.15, ll.10-27);

(6) A method for producing a circuit description of a design, the method comprising:

a) from the design, selecting a candidate sub-network that performs a plurality output functions, wherein the candidate sub-network includes a set of circuit elements (col.3, ll.31-35, ll.48-54 and ll.57-60 and col.8, ll.35-42 and ll.54-57);

b) generating a parameter (value) based on the output functions (col.9, ll.5-17);

c) using the parameter to retrieve a replacement sub-network from a storage structure that stores replacement sub-networks (col.8, ll.47-51 and col.9, ll.5-17);

d) replacing the selected candidate sub-network with the replacement sub-network in the design (col.24, ll.50-65);

(7) The method of claim 6 further comprising identifying the output functions performed by the sub-network (col.3, ll.31-35; ll.52-54 and ll.57-60 and col.8, ll.39-42);

(8) The method of claim 6, wherein the set of circuit elements includes only one circuit element (col.17, ll.45-46);

(9) The method of claim 6, wherein the set of circuit elements includes at least two circuit elements (col.8, ll.54-57 and col.17, ll.45-46);

(10) The method of claim 6, wherein each circuit element of the sub-network has an output, and each circuit element's output provides a result of one output function performed by the selected candidate sub-network (col.15, ll.10-27);

(11) The method of claim 6, wherein each circuit element of the sub-network has an output, and each output function performed by the selected candidate sub-network is provided at only a circuit-element output that fans out of the sub-network (col.8, ll.54-57 and col.14, ll.9-17);

(14) The method of claim 6 further comprising:
receiving the design, wherein the design is a combinational-logic network (col.9, ll.18-34);

selecting additional candidate sub-networks (col.3, ll.31-35, ll.48-54 and ll.57-60 and col.8, ll.35-42 and ll.54-57);

replacing some of the selected additional sub-networks with replacement sub-networks retrieved from the storage structure (col.24, ll.50-65);

wherein the replacement of the candidate sub-networks optimizes the combinational-logic network design (col.24, ll.50-65);

(16) The method of claim 6, wherein the parameter is a set of indices for storing the sub-network in the storage structure, wherein the set of indices includes an index for each output function performed by the sub-network (col.8, ll.58-67 and col.9, ll.1-17);

(17) The method of claim 16, wherein using the parameter comprises:

a) identifying each replacement sub-network stored in the storage structure that is associated with each index in the set of indices (col.3, ll.31-35; ll.52-54 and ll.57-60; col.8, ll.39-42 and ll.58-67 and col.9, ll.1-17); and

b) retrieving each identified replacement sub-network (col.8, ll.47-51);

(18) The method of claim 16, wherein the indices are numerical indices (col.8, ll.58-67 and col.9, ll.1-17);

(27) The method of claim 6 further comprising:

before replacing the candidate sub-network with the replacement sub-network, evaluating whether to replace the selected candidate sub-network with the replacement sub-network (col.24, ll.50-65);

wherein said replacing is based on the evaluation (col.24, ll.50-65);

(28) The method of claim 27, wherein the evaluating comprises computing a cost function (col.4, ll.53-67 and col.5, ll.1-6);

(29) The method of claim 27 further comprising:

selecting additional candidate sub-networks (col.3, ll.31-35, ll.48-54 and ll.57-60 and col.8, ll.35-42 and ll.54-57);

identifying a replacement sub-network for each selected candidate sub-network (col.3, ll.31-35; ll.52-54 and ll.57-60 and col.8, ll.39-42);

evaluating each identified replacement (col.24, ll.50-65);

based on the evaluations, replacing some of the candidate sub-networks with the replacement sub-networks identified for the candidate sub-networks (col.24, ll.50-65);

(30) The method of claim 27,

wherein retrieving the replacement sub-network comprises retrieving several replacement sub-networks, the method further comprising:

evaluating each retrieved sub-network to identify viable/suitable replacement candidates (col.17, ll.40-58);

wherein the replacement sub-network that replaces the candidate sub-network is one of the viable replacement candidates (col.24, ll.50-65).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 12, 13, 15 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jain in view of Jain et al. (US Patent 6,301,687).

4. With respect to claims 12, 13 and 15 Jain teaches the features above but lacks a method for producing the circuit description using a local function for each circuit element and converting the logical representation of the design to a circuit-level representation.

Jain discloses method for verification of combinational circuits using a filtering oriented approach including:

(12) The method of claim 6 further comprising:

receiving a local function for each circuit element of the selected candidate sub-network (col.8, ll.37-45);

identifying each output function from the received local functions (col.8, ll.16-35);

(13) The method of claim 12 wherein each local or output function is represented in terms of a binary decision diagram ("BDD"), and the sub-network has at least first and second circuit elements, wherein the first circuit element performs a first local function, and the second circuit element performs a second local function, wherein the BDD of a first output function is derived from the BDD of the first local function, and the BDD of a second output function is derived from the BDD's of at least the first and second local functions (col.7, ll.47-67 and col.8, ll.1-2);

(15) The method of claim 6 further comprising:

converting the logical representation of the design to a circuit-level representation (col.1, ll.34-46).

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skills in the art at the time the invention was made to employ Jain's teaching regarding the method for producing the circuit description using the local function for each circuit element and converting the logical representation of the design to a circuit-level representation to improve accuracy of the integrated circuit design.

5. With respect to claim 19 Jain 1 in view of Jain 2 teaches the features above but lacks a method for producing the circuit description using an indices into relational database, which is well known in the art at the time the invention was made.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skills in the art at the time the invention was made to employ Jain's teaching regarding the method for producing the circuit description using the indices into relational database (for example Oracle database) to improve efficiency of the integrated circuit design.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 20-26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Naum B Levin whose telephone number is 703-305-0144. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:00-4:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Matthew S Smith can be reached on 703-308-1323. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9318 for regular communications and 703-872-9319 for After Final communications.

Application/Control Number: 10/062,044

Page 9

Art Unit: 2825

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0956.

N L

March 10, 2003


VUTHE SIEK
PRIMARY EXAMINER